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Dear Lila,

The Hague,
Nov. 17, 1976.

You asked what the rūpa is, when we worry. You also wonder whether worry is Kūkkūcca, and you wonder about the object of worry.

When you say: what is the rūpa, it is useful to make your question more precise: what is the rūpa, does it mean, which rūpas are present, arising and falling away, while we worry, or: is rūpa the object of worry, or: what is the physical base (vatthu) of the citta and cetasikas while there is worry, or, ^(there) are rūpas conditioned by worry?---

First of all, when we speak about worry in conventional language, it seems we mean thinking and thinking again with aversion about something. Kūkkūcca means regret about something bad we did, or regret about something good we did not do. This is also included in worry as it is used in conventional language, but, as I said in conventional language it is used more widely. I find with the study of cetasikas that hardly ever the ^{English} translation of the cetasika renders exactly ^(its) meaning. I always have to say: in conventional language it is used in a different sense, but as regards the reality of this or this cetasika, it is.....

Your questioning about rūpa stems from your searching for the ways nāma conditions rūpa and rūpa conditions nāma. You write: everything is nama and rupa, but you wonder how they interact.

When we think, or worry, or are attached, for example, there are, in this plane of existence, the rūpas which make up what we call 'our body' arising and falling away. They ^{are a} condition ^{for} the many cittas which are arising and falling away. Some people want to point only to the brain (and this is just some rūpas, arising and falling away) and think of brain as ^(a very special) condition for cittas. But not only the brain, also the other rūpas play a part. There is heart-base, the physical base of some cittas (not of all cittas), it has a function. But what we call blood, also has a function. Take all the blood out and you cannot think.

Cittas condition rūpas, for instance when you laugh it is very obvious, or when you talk. We do not try to pinpoint which rūpa is exactly at which moment conditioned by which citta. This is at least for the moment beyond our scope. Is it enough to know in general that nama conditions rupa? It is already so difficult to know when nama appears and when rupa appears. When there is dosa (you call it she, I like to call it 'it', since I find 'it' indicates it is only an element, a conditioned element)

can there be mindfulness of the dosa? Is dosa the object of mindfulness, or is it the akusala citta? Or is it the unpleasant feeling? Or is it hardness which may appear? Or is it the experience of hardness, or is it aversion about hardness? It is really not so easy as it may seem to be. And how do we know already when we just notice dosa, and when there is mindfulness of exactly that characteristic? Anybody may notice dosa, but that is not mindfulness. When there is mindfulness there is only one characteristic at a time, not mixed with a concept of dosa, or the name dosa, or an idea of a 'whole', our dosa, or a feeling and dosa together. All this to show that I find it already difficult enough to know different characteristics of nāma and rūpa, and that knowing what conditions what is much too difficult for me.

Talking about dosa, I am in the mood to say a few things about it. I had a number of things which did not go the way I wanted to and these things always come in a row. It is the most common thing in the world to have aversion, but also attachment and ignorance. But people dislike especially dosa, because it is accompanied by unpleasant feeling and who likes to have that. People keep on asking what can they do when they have dosa. It is all very well to say: be aware of it. However, awareness does not arise so often, and how could we direct mindfulness to that reality, that is impossible. We can also say: everything is only nāma and rūpa, and this is perfectly true, but is everything nāma and rūpa to us already? *nāma and rūpa*

Mindfulness of (does not arise so frequently, *but*) the Buddha taught many different ways of kusala. Instead of *having* unwholesome thoughts, one could *recollect in daily life* the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, *or one could have* kindness for others. Many subjects of samatha can also be used as a recollection in daily life. This may be a condition for kusala cittas, but it will not *always* work. Nobody can order his cittas the way he likes. It shows that they are conditioned realities, saṅkhāra dhammas, they are beyond control. Could it console you to know at least in theory that dosa is a saṅkhāra dhamma? We have accumulated it and when there are conditions it comes out, such is life. Understanding this will help us not to make the dosa into something terribly important. What helps best, of course, is learning through one's own experience, that is, through mindfulness; that dosa is not my dosa, but only a saṅkhāra dhamma. And there is not only dosa, there is also moha, and lobha, and hardness or softness, many other realities which each have their own characteristics.

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now let us substitute body for iron. When heat appears somewhere in the body, do we have a kind of possessive idea of my body-heat? It shows our clinging to the body. Or can it be just heat? Only for a moment, when we do not have the intention to be -- mindful, but it just arises? When we think of body-heat there is a concept, not a reality. Sometimes our heart may be beating fast. Is it our heart, or can just hardness or motion appear? We cling to what we call my heart. At another moment we may die when the heart is beating too fast. How beneficial when mindfulness has been accumulated, it would be a condition for us to cling less to the body. We will need that.

We may have doubts whether contours of different objects we think we see are appearing through eyes or through the mind-door. Then I find that it helps to remember that seeing and for example reading are very different; recognizing the letters and knowing what they mean are done by cittas which experience objects through the mind-door, but since cittas arise and fall away so fast it seems that reading is done through the eye-door. It reminds us of the amount of our ignorance and this is healthy, not discouraging. Do we have the intention to know visible object and seeing? The less there is intention, the better.

It seems that you think that mindfulness should know all the cetasikas which arise with the citta, all at once at the same time. Mindfulness can only be aware of one object, otherwise it is not awareness, but only what we take for awareness.

You write something about people experiencing voidness. I do not know what that is, ^{it} sounds like a kind of speculation. From the teachings I know that realities are void of the self, same meaning as anattā, and also nibbāna is called the void, but all this is beyond my scope, I cannot experience it. Do you have the intention to attain vipassanā ñāṇas and to attain nibbāna? I know that it won't happen when one has the intention, since it is the task of paññā to attain when the time has come for it. I think less and less of ñāṇas or of nibbāna because I find it difficult enough to know different characteristics of nāma and rūpa. I am not curious to know what nibbāna is like, it would only be speculation.

You use the term arūpa, a state of leaving the body behind. I do not know this, again, beyond my scope. It seems a kind of thinking. Arūpa ^{means nāma, it} is used in composite words, like: arūpa-jhāna, which can be attained only by those who cultivated the conditions for it. Arūpa-plane is the plane of existence where there is no rūpa and I do not know what it is like. Happy resettling in San Francisco. I sympathize with you that you had some disappointments as to your house in the woods. But now you have Rina and some other friends.

Kindest regards,
Nina.

Our dosa before, in ^{many} lives, conditions the dosa today. It is also true that lobha and moha condition dosa. Moha arises with each akusala citta; ignorance about realities conditions a lot of akusala. Lobha also conditions it, because when you like something and you do not get it there is aversion.

~~_____~~ The sotāpanna who has eradicated ^{wrong view} still has dosa. The anāgāmi who is not attached to sensuous objects has no more dosa.

At the end of your letter you were wondering whether memory is a rūpa, and whether ideas are nāma, and you also wondered whether cetasika is "subject".

Every reality which can experience something is nāma, that is: citta and cetasika (I do not talk about nibbāna, the unconditioned nāma). Memory is a cetasika, sañña, it can experience something.

~~_____~~ Realities which cannot experience anything are rūpas.

Ideas or concepts are neither nāma nor rūpa, because they are not realities, they can be the object of the citta which thinks, but they are not real. Citta can think of realities, but also of things which are not real, concepts or names, stories, phantasies.

It appears from your letter that you find it wrong to think of concepts, it is as if you want to correct yourself. It is natural to think of concepts, we have to in our daily life. This kind of thinking arises because of conditions, why correct it? But even thinking can be object of awareness, it has a characteristic. We do not have the intention to be mindful of thinking, we do not try to catch vitakka, or vicara, but sometimes that characteristic may appear. When does it appear? When we do not have the intention to be aware. Do you have the intention to be mindful? Certainly also that intention can be object of awareness, but I find mostly when we have the intention to be aware there is bound to be thinking about realities instead of mindfulness of just one object at a time. When there is thinking about a whole, or an idea of a cetasika which we have in our mind, the object is not a nama or rupa, but a concept.

For instance, when I am ironing, heat may appear, just heat. At such a moment there is no idea of an iron. It would be absurd that an iron can be experienced through the body-sense. It is just the heat, no iron in the heat. A moment later we may think of: heat of the iron, than the citta thinks of a concept. The concept is not real, but the thinking is. All this sounds convincing. But